

THE ON GUARD

Volume XXXIV, 9 NEWSPAPER of the ARMY and AIR NATIONAL GUARD November 2005

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Homecoming



Guard leaders hail New Hampshire program for returning troops. Page 11.

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Hurricane recovery experts at it again

By Staff Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

Florida National Guard

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. – It was nearly 7 p.m., and 13 Florida Army National Guard Soldiers were helping put a community back together as daylight was giving way to a cool evening in southeastern Florida on Oct. 25.

The Soldiers were part of Task Force 53, the National Guard's main relief effort of more than 1,000 personnel for Hurricane Wilma in the area. They were providing security for an ice and water distribution site at the Oakwood Shopping Plaza near Interstate 95.

Much of the region from Miami to West Palm Beach lost electricity when the Category 3 hurricane sawed across Florida early on Monday, Oct. 24. Lack of power brought out people looking for provisions, and they arrived at distribution sites in cars and trucks and on foot with shopping carts.

More than 3,700 Florida Guardsmen and women are on duty supporting operations in the southern Florida region, primarily operating the points of distribution, security and logistics staging areas. Florida has responded to eight hurricanes in the last 14 months.

Approximately 3,000 Florida National Guard troops remain on high alert and could be rapidly mobilized as situations warrant.

See WILMA On Page 6



Photo by Spc. Edouard Gluck

The morning sun reflects the fact that Florida National Guard troops, and their vehicles, were ready to roll out for relief missions early on the Tuesday after Hurricane Wilma cut across southern Florida on Monday, Oct. 24.

'Stars and Stripes Forever'



Photo by George F. Johnson

Army National Guard Staff Sgt. David West of Rosberg, Ore., waves a flag as he arrives with other members of the 116th Brigade Combat Team at McChord Air Force Base near Tacoma, Wash., on Sunday, Oct. 23, after a tour of duty in Iraq. The 116th Brigade Combat Team will demobilize at Fort Lewis Washington.

Missouri National Guard MP unit awarded Presidential Unit Citation

By Spc. Katherine L. Collins

Missouri National Guard

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – In response to the 2175th Military Police Company's continued distinguished service, the Missouri Army National Guard unit was honored with the Presidential Unit Citation Award Sept. 26.

"We're tremendously proud of the Soldiers in the 2175th. Their exemplary performance in Iraq is a true reflection of this Army's best trained military police," said Brigade Executive Officer, Lt. Col. James D. Tate.

The Presidential Unit Citation Award, which has been in effect since 1941 and was originally signed into existence as the Distinguished Unit Citation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, may be awarded to units of the Armed Forces of the United States and cobelligerent nations for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy.

The unit must display exceptional gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions setting it apart from other units participating in the same campaign. The degree of heroism required is equal to that which warrants the award of a Distinguished Service Cross to an individual.

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Letter to the Editor: Missing Mississippi

Dear Editor,

Here, I have The On Guard Oct. 2005 issue in hand. I reviewed it page-by-page and find your focus to be just as narrow-sited as the worldwide news media, who stormed New Orleans days later to cover a completely different story about Hurricane Katrina.

Your coverage of the hurricane seemed to completely miss the area and folks that truly got the wrath of Hurricane Katrina's full frontal force. It was scant to say the least.

The eye of the storm, obviously unknown to many, was over MISSISSIPPI not NEW ORLEANS. While, granted, it was tragic, that the levys didn't hold and many parts of the city were flooded (not because of storm surge, but because pre-existing problems).

Problems, chaos and countless lives were lost due to pre-existing and known problems that should have been taken care of long before Katrina came knocking so close to home.

The entire length of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, plus a mile inland or more, was completely devastated. Nothing was left! Communities were obliterated and now

cease to exist.

Now, lets get real here. The Mississippi Army and Air National Guard, under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, had our men and women at Camp Shelby (which was heavily damaged, too) and many of our Guardsmen in armories along the Mississippi Gulf Coast hunkered down so they could assist as soon as they could safely do so. They risked their lives.

Not once was one of our Mississippi National Guard members mentioned in your publication. One of our members, Sgt. Josh E. Russell, 27, of Petal, Miss., and assigned to Detachment 1, Company A, 890th Engineer Battalion in Lumberton, and who had just returned with his unit from serving in Iraq for a year, lost his life trying to get from Camp Shelby to the storm victims on the Gulf Coast. I haven't seen or heard much about his heroic deeds.

You see, State Highway 49, a direct route from Camp Shelby to the beach in Gulfport (62 miles) was all but impassable. Once Katrina made landfall, it took our Guard per-

sonnel six hours to travel from Camp Shelby to reach their forward emergency and operations center in Gulfport.

Many of our Soldiers currently serving in Iraq with the 155th Brigade Combat Team lost homes and everything they owned, even some who had died serving in Iraq, and the families they left behind lost everything in Katrina.

We have some truly exceptional Mississippi National Guardsmen who always go above and beyond the call of duty. I find it very ironic that no one wants news when there is a success story to tell.

There weren't as many shock and awe stories coming from Mississippi as there were from New Orleans because we in Mississippi unite to take care of our own, and because it is the Hospitality State, we took care of the rest of those that came to Mississippi to write about New Orleans.

Needless to say, I am very disappointed in your publication, for highlighting the hype!

Retired Master Sgt. Sandy Ates
Mississippi Air National Guard

TRICARE Reserve Select: Medical benefits for Guard members

Live a healthier life

By David N. Tornberg, MD, MPH

Acting Deputy Director of the TRICARE

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) our life expectancy is increasing, while our overall health is decreasing. This data comes from the CDC's 2004 National Health Interview Survey where respondents were asked to rate their health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor – increasing numbers are rating their health lower.

I want to give you some tips on how to live a longer, happier, healthier life.

It's Never Too Late to Start!

Here are my "Top Ten" tips you can use to add years to your life:

-If you use tobacco, stop! It's the single most preventable cause of illness and disability.

-Increase your fruit and vegetable intake by 1-2 servings daily to decrease your risk of heart disease.

-Eat complex carbohydrates, such as whole grain bread, brown rice and pasta, to reduce your risk of heart disease and some cancers.

-Eat "fatty" fish at least twice a week.

According to the American Heart Association, fish is a good source of protein and is low in saturated fat, unlike fatty meat products. "Fatty" fish include mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines, albacore tuna and salmon. They are high in two kinds of omega-fatty acids that prevent heart disease.

-Use less salt to reduce your risk of stroke, stomach cancer, osteoporosis and respiratory disease. One suggestion: Don't use a salt shaker, use a pepper mill instead.

-Be active, starting now. You are never too old! Most health benefits can be gained by doing regular moderate physical activity. The United States Surgeon General recommends taking 10,000 steps daily to be fit and healthy – that's about 3-4 miles a day. If you

are not active now, start slowly and add a few more steps each day. Gardening, dancing and walking the dog are all activities that add up to better fitness. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, fitness may be regained with regular physical activity even into extreme old age.

-Be social. Dine with friends, play cards or bowl with a group. According to professor Thomas Glass from the Harvard School of Public Health, research shows that social activities and maintaining connections with others are meaningful and create a sense of purpose, which leads to healthy aging.

-Be spiritual. Professor Glass' research indicates that spirituality is associated with survival. Other studies validate his research.

-Stimulate your brain. Do word puzzles, play chess, take classes – engage your mind to prevent cognitive loss and dementia.

-Start NOW! I cannot emphasize enough that it's never too late to start. A study of University of Pennsylvania graduates followed from their early 40s to their mid-70s showed adopting low-risk habits in later life increased both life span and health span.

To learn more about healthy aging, check out TRICARE Online (TOL) at www.tricare-online.com. This Web site is full of accurate and trustworthy health care information, and will link you to research about illnesses, medication, alternative therapies, and information on how to live a healthy lifestyle.

-By practicing preventive health care, such as regular checkups, maintaining fitness, eating well and getting enough rest, you will enjoy an active lifestyle well into your later years.

As always, I recommend you seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new exercise or dietary regimen. Happy aging!

Full-time members eligible for Safe Haven benefits

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – For the first time, families of National Guard members and other people in the nation's reserve military forces who have been placed on federal active duty because of a domestic emergency are eligible for help from the Defense Department's Safe Haven entitlement.

David Chu, undersecretary of defense for Personnel and Readiness, has approved this change in the Safe Haven policy to help the families of reserve component members who have had to evacuate their homes in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Safe Haven program makes it possible for active duty service members' families that have been ordered by a competent authority and displaced by a disaster to relocate, at government expense, to a new lodging location.

The policy may provide entitlements for up to 179 days, about six months, after dependents have been authorized to evacuate their residences that have been severely damaged or destroyed because of the storms.

This is the first time that families of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen on full time Title 32 status for duty in the afflicted states are eligible for this kind of disaster relief, based upon the magnitude of the national disaster, National Guard Bureau officials explained.

Previously, only Title 10 service members, on federal active duty, were eligible for Safe Haven entitlements if their military homes were damaged or destroyed, it was further explained.

"We applaud this effort by the Department of Defense. Their immediate recognition of this need was critical for timely benefits," said Sue Pinto of the National Guard Bureau's Personnel Readiness Division.

"This Safe Haven evacuation entitlement provides relief to those National Guard members whose dependents had to evacu-



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Roger Dey

Louisiana Army National Guard Soldiers in the 256th Brigade Combat Team line up in Alexandria, La., to fill out the paperwork so they can take leave and begin helping their families recover from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. The Guard Soldiers returned from a year of duty in Iraq on the night of Sept. 10.

ate, whose homes were devastated, and who served in a Title 32 or Title 10 status," a Guard Bureau official stated. "By providing the evacuation entitlement to the Title 32 members, it helps to assist those National Guard members who support the hurricane disaster relief."

Three events must coincide in order for dependents to be eligible for evacuation allowances, according to the policy that Dr. Chu signed on Sept. 29.

-- A competent authority must authorize or order an evacuation or continued Safe Haven status for dependents who have already been evacuated. Competent authorities may include a state adjutant general, a unit commander, or the director, head, chief or supervisor of an organization or office.

- The dependents must actually leave or

remain away from their residences because of the evacuation order. Dependents do not receive Safe Haven benefits if they remain at their residence, Pinto pointed out.

- The National Guard members must be on federal active duty orders at the time.

Evacuation allowances for travel, transportation of household goods and privately owned vehicles, and daily expenses are prescribed in Volume 1, Chapter 6 of the Defense Department's Joint Federal Travel Regulations.

Although Chu signed the policy in late September, it applies to Guard members who were called to active duty to support the hurricane relief mission beginning on Aug. 29, explained Pinto. That was the first date that National Guard personnel

were eligible for Title 32 status because of the storms, she added.

The expanded Safe Haven policy also applies to National Guard Title 32 technicians because they are considered Defense Department civilian employees, and they are afforded the same Safe Haven benefits provided to other Defense civilians, explained Kevin Crowley, the Guard Bureau's deputy director of Manpower and Personnel.

Safe Haven allowances will cease when the earliest of the following events take place, Crowley said.

- The termination of the evacuation order by the commander who ordered it.
- The start of the evacuees' return to the service members' duty station.
- After the maximum of 179 days.
- Termination of the Title 32 or Title 10 orders.

Vermont Guard member pumps up local football program

By 1st Lt. Veronica Saffo

Vermont National Guard

BRADFORD, Vt. - Surrounded by a sea of purple jerseys, Staff Sgt. Cindy Clemence was hailed as a "true American hero" at a rally recently held in her honor at Oxbow High School.

While deployed to Iraq, Clemence decided to dedicate her hazardous duty pay to a program and personal dream she had been working on for several years - a football team for Oxbow High. Her contribution of \$20,000 made that dream a reality.

"Cindy always steps up to the plate and delivers," said Oxbow Principal Robert Jones who described Clemence as

someone who consistently dedicated her energies to students.

Clemence formed a committee in 2003 to begin researching and raising funds for a football team because she believed many students would benefit from such a program.

"You are a true American hero," said Coach Mark Palmieri who heartily thanked Clemence. He added he had never seen a group of boys more excited about playing a sport in his 30 years of coaching.

Maj. Gen. Martha Rainville, the Vermont National Guard's adjutant general, presented Clemence with a certificate of appreciation and an official coin for being such a positive role model for the students, the community and her fellow

Guard members.

Rainville also commended Clemence for exemplifying the Vermont National Guard's values: Integrity, Service Before Self, Loyalty and Honor. Rainville then challenged the football players to participate as team members with the same values that Clemence demonstrated.

Clemence humbly accepted the praise and tokens of appreciation.

"This is a dream. Thank you, guys," she said while smiling warmly at the crowd.

Clemence is a traditional Vermont National Guard member and a member of Task Force Green Mountain which is deployed to Kuwait for a year-long security force mission.

Pennsylvania Guard flies water, feed to stranded cattle

By **Spc. S. Patrick McCollum**

Maryland National Guard

BELLE CHASSE, La. – Staff Sgt. Lois Wald, a Chinook helicopter crew member with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, went through her daily routine to prepare her helicopter. She took off the ties binding the helicopter rotors, uncased the engines, and put on her flight gear. She and her crew were on a mission to help the residents of Louisiana – by saving their cattle.

Human beings were not the only species that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita affected when they ripped through the Gulf Coast in late August and September. Besides the displacement of family pets and wildlife, cattle stranded at the Cameron Parish Wildlife Refuge on the Louisiana-Texas border were hard hit by tidal flooding.

To help save the livestock, Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment from Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., used their twin-engine CH-47 Chinook helicopters to transport food and water to the surviving cattle.

"On some missions we took some hay out to them so they could have a chance to survive until we could get some barges out there," said Sgt. Dwayne Baker, another

Chinook crew member.

On other missions, a 2,000-gallon Bambi bucket, normally used to fight forest fires, was used to carry fresh water to the cows.

"I've been out fighting forest fires with the bucket, but I never thought I'd be using it to take water to cows," said Baker.

"A lot of the water and ground has been covered with seawater because of the tidal surge that came in as a result of Rita," making it undrinkable, said Wald. Fresh water was drawn from the closest available sources and deposited anywhere possible.

"Open freezers, refrigerators, wherever these cattle were at, we'd dump water and give them a little bit of relief," said another aviator.

To supervise the operation, a veterinarian from the U.S. Department of Agriculture also rode along and showed the best places to drop. Operations like these have helped Louisiana ranchers immensely, crew members said. Besides the humanitarian aspect, keeping the cattle alive is also important for the economy. Ranchers without cattle would have nothing to sell, slowing the prospects for economic recovery. That was another reason why residents of Cameron Parish were glad to see Chinooks hauling water.

"The locals down here really appreciate us



Maryland National Guard photo

Pennsylvania Army National Guard aviators used Chinooks and 2,000-gallon Bambi buckets to fly fresh water to cattle stranded in Louisiana in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

being here, especially the ranchers that have lost a lot of cattle from their herds," a crew member said. "That was their livelihood, their life. And the fact that we were out there trying to save these cattle for them, the locals think we're great."

It was well after dark that the members of the helicopter crew got back. After much water hauled and many miles traveled, Wald and the rest of the tired crew members tied down the rotors, covered the engines, took off their gear, and headed for bed.

Puerto Rico National Guard doctors treat hurricane victims

By **Pfc. Edward Robles**

Puerto Rico National Guard

NEW ORLEANS – Do you trust your doctor?

Doctors are considered to be highly skilled in their field, and when a medical emergency strikes, you can find yourself in the hands of a stranger in an emergency room. That's when you have to believe in the doctor's skill and competence.

Seven doctors, among a staff of 17, were members of Task Force Puerto Rico during the hurricane relief mission at the Troop Medical Clinic in New Orleans. The staff practiced preventative medicine and performed minor emergency procedures.

"I came here to help," said Capt. Ernesto Marrero, a doctor with the 1165th Area Support Medical Company from Salinas, Puerto Rico. His emergency room experience at Hospital Universitario Ramon Arnau in Bayamon prepared him for the demands of multiple patients with immediate needs, Marrero said.

When two patients were rushed to the clinic almost simultaneously, he treated them both promptly. According to Marrero, the first patient was dropped off by the Salvation Army, which was conducting diagnostic testing to residents of the area.

"They tested my blood sugar level to be positive 420," said Jim Giveault, who was tested again by Marrero.

"I screened and interviewed the patient to determine risk factors for diseases," said Marrero. "Tests found him to be classified as a diabetic or at least suspected of having diabetes. When I checked his eyes I found indications suggesting high blood pressure and kidney troubles. His blood pressure reading confirmed hypertension.

"I counseled him on the need to take care of himself in order to prevent a stroke. I built a rapport and I felt like I got through to him."

Giveault said that the diagnosis made quite an impression on him and that he would take his medication and return for a follow-up.

A hurricane relief worker with a hand injury was the next patient that needed immediate attention.

"First, I looked to see how severe the injury was," said Marrero. "He suffered a deep cut to his finger. When I was confident that he was stable, I sterilized and prepared the injury for a minor operation."

Marrero conducted the operation and covered the injured finger with sterilized gauze.

"The treatment was good," said the patient, Kareem Mitchell, a New Orleans resident still unable to return to his home because of flooding. "If this was a civilian hospital emergency room, I'd still be waiting. I really appreciate this help."

"This has been a great experience," said Marrero. "I love what I do. I couldn't picture myself doing anything else."

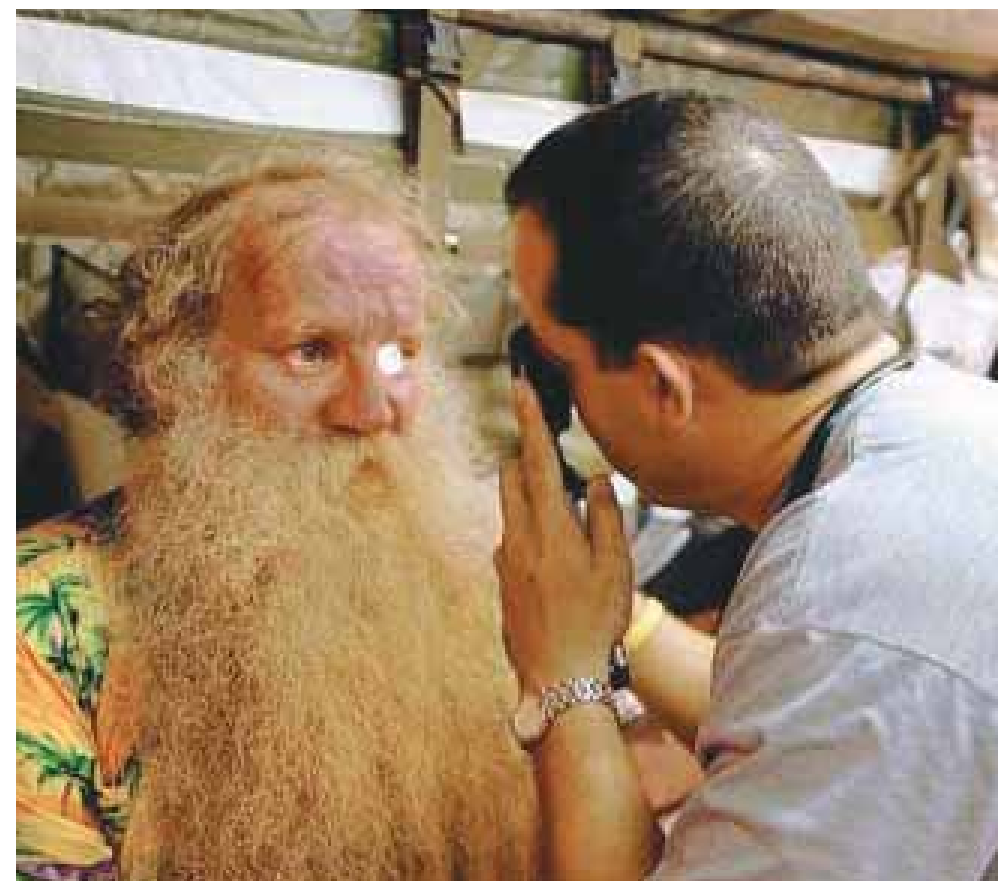


Photo by Pfc. Edward Robles

Puerto Rico Army National Guard Capt. Ernesto Marrero, a doctor with the 1165th Area Support Medical Company, examines Jim Giveault, a New Orleans resident, at the Troop Medical Clinic at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans.

Guard shooters take top honors

By Sgt 1st Class David A. Smith

National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – The All-Guard team took top honors in the majority of matches while competing against military marksmen from around the world during the 15th annual Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting at Camp Joseph T. Robinson.

Better known as AFSAM, the event was created by the National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit to promote marksmanship training and competition among U.S. military forces and allied nations. This year's competition attracted approximately 200 participants, including U.S. representation by Soldiers, Airmen, and Marines.

"The U.S. was represented by the Army, Army Reserve, the Marine Corps and the All-Guard team which is comprised of both Army and Air National Guardsmen," said Capt. Richard Jones, AFSAM officer in charge. "We also have international teams joining us from Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom."

The All-Guard team's impressive performance was a validation of training, said Col. John Lowry, the meeting director and commander of the marksmanship training unit.

The AFSAM is no walk in the park. Combat realism, physical exertion, close individual and team coordination as well as basic marksmanship are integral parts of the disciplines in the AFSAM course of rifle and pistol fire.

The AFSAM tests individuals in marksmanship skills and use of weapons systems in a battle-focused training environment. South Dakota Air Guard Master Sgt. Chris Dyer, a member of the All-Guard team, said this type of competition "enhances the Soldiers' and Airmen's ability to survive on the battlefield."

"For pistol, we have shooting and moving matches, simulated barricades, prone and kneeling positions," said Dyer. "We're shooting in an environment that, for the most part, Soldiers and Airmen don't get to experience in their normal qualification programs."

That's putting it lightly. Dyer's regimen, during two separate days, included a confidence course and a timed two-mile run, both of which were followed by battle-focused shooting scenarios.

Rifle shooters didn't have it any easier. They negotiated a confidence course and an obstacle course while competing in drills that were challenging in their own rite. The drills included engaging targets while moving rapidly from 25 to 500 yards.

"The Marksmanship Training Unit is the center of grav-



Photo by Master Sgt. Lindsey Edenfield

Maj. Gen. Don Morrow, the adjutant general for Arkansas, and Mr. Christopher Gardner, assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau, pose with members of the All-Guard Team and the prestigious Commander in Chief Service Rifle Trophy that they won during the recent Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting in Arkansas. The trophy was awarded to the team for earning first place in match 360, the International Interservice Service Rifle Team Match. Kneeling from left are Staff Sergeants Mark Richard, Nathan Watters and Gary Varberg and 1st Lt. Rodney Richmond. Standing from left are Sergeants 1st Class Gregory Neiderhiser and Mark Benson, Maj. Gen. Morrow, Tech. Sgt. William Bednarowski, Sgt. Scott Manhart and Gardner.

ity for marksmanship in the National Guard,' Lowry said. "Members of the All-Guard team are, for the most part, Soldiers and Airmen who have attended one or more of the various marksmanship courses we offer.

Staff Sgt. Mark Richard, an Indiana National Guardsman and All-Guard rifle team member, testifies to that.

"I think it really pays off," he said. "When we mobilized to go overseas, the things I learned through competitive marksmanship, working with other nations, working down here with schools ... were a big help for us. I could teach people in our company and battalion and they could learn the proper way to zero and how to employ their weapon systems. That instilled confidence in them and when we went over, it definitely showed ... in the way they handled their weapons."

Richard reported that his unit "got zeroed fast, got qualified quickly and while over there had no accidental discharges. It's a direct result of what we do out here," he added. "We see other countries and the way they train. You can take from that and build on your own program at your unit."

"When I started in 1994, we were near the bottom of the barrel as shooters," Richard continued. "The Brits were the team to beat. Now, we're pretty much the premier team - the team everybody wants to beat. It comes from learning from everybody and putting it into our program and making it better."

"The courses of fire here at AFSAM are modeled a lot after what we've learned over the years from the U.K. competitive matches," Dyer said. "Shooting these types of matches allow Soldiers and Airmen opportunities to engage the enemy in situations not usually obtainable through their local training environments."

"You take that down to the company level and teach your individual marksmen, 'this is how you shoot and this is why you shoot that way,' and it makes more sense to them. It brings the level of everybody up," Richard emphasized. "I think it's showing over there in Iraq. We hit what we aim at. They just blow bullets back at us. It makes a difference."

"When people see this type of competition, it says a lot for the role we play together in our interoperability in the continuing Global War on Terrorism that each and every one of you face day in and day out," Christopher Gardner, assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau, told the competitors during the awards banquet.

"You stand daily at the door of freedom," Gardner added. "You should be proud to be here and proud to represent your country."



Photo by Master Sgt. Brian Mortier

A U.S. Marine takes aim at the opportunity to outshoot his allies.

That's a lot of MREs ...



Photo by Capt. Kevin Hynes

Staff Sgt. Joe Rodriguez, a Nebraska Air National Guard boom operator, pushes a pallet of Meals Ready to Eat onto a forklift during a relief flight from Lincoln, Neb., to Naval Air Station New Orleans, La. in September. During a two-day operation, the Nebraska Air National Guard delivered approximately 66,000 Meals Ready to Eat to the hurricane-stricken city.

The 107th Fighter Squadron stands tall

Mt. CLEMENS, Mich. – Exemplifying the qualities of an extraordinary unit, the 107th Fighter Squadron has earned its second Air Force Association Outstanding Air National Guard Flying Unit Award.

The 107th Fighter Squadron first received the OANGFL award in 2002. Much has changed since then with the exception of the squadron's determination to set high standards while meeting its obligations to protect the homeland.

The award was presented during special ceremonies at its annual conference at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington last month. The OANGFU award is given to the Air National Guard unit that is able to meet mission readiness and able to provide support training during the given year.

During the last two years, the 107th Fighter Squadron has been conducting dual missions. The 107th Fighter Squadron was the only unit equipped with the new Theater Airborne Reconnaissance System (TARS) and used the technology while deployed to Iraq in 2004. Now, because of the squadron's expertise, it is the only unit in the Air Force tasked with training other ANG, active duty and reserve units to use TARS.

The TARS pod, as it is commonly called, is a giant camera attached to the belly of a F-16. It is capable of reading a license plate

from 30,000 feet away and reproducing the image in hours instead of days, like the old reconnaissance system.

"The TARS POD is revolutionary. It not only allows us to target areas of opportunities, but also enables us to be flexible in addressing battle damage assessments. We can track enemy movement, drop our payload and view before and after shots all while

"The TARS POD is revolutionary. It not only allows us to target areas of opportunities, but also enables us to be flexible in addressing battle damage assessments. We can track enemy movement, drop our payload and view before and after shots all while keeping the F-16 ready for a dogfight," said Staff Sgt. Craig Shipway, one of eight TARS POD trainers with the 107th located at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich. The squadron trained three other units in a 120-day cycle while simultaneously maintaining

– Staff Sgt. Craig Shipway

a Noble Eagle commitment for homeland defense.

"This award has been won on the efforts of every Airman and woman who volunteers. Many of them left civilian jobs without pay to participate in these missions," stated Master Sgt. William Yurgen, flight chief for maintenance for the 107th Fighter Squadron.

Senior Master Sgt. Natalie Bigham, TARS NCOIC for the 127th Wing, was on hand for the presentation of the AFA award. "In seeing the fruition of countless training exercises and meetings, it makes me so happy to hear my unit mentioned in such high regards," she said.

FROM PAGE 1

Wilma

Florida Guardsmen and women were quickly placed at 81 points of distribution throughout 12 counties and began distributing water, ice and food as soon as they were delivered.

The Guard Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment were primarily at the Oakwood Plaza site to provide security and traffic control for the relief workers. They also helped pass out bags of ice and crates of water to the seemingly endless crowds pouring in to the site.

"Most of the people have been cooperative, but you have some that are frustrated," said 1st Lt. Jermaine Boone as the sun began to set in a deep red haze. "But we're professional. We give them their ice and water and let them move on out. There have been no problems here," Boone added.

Boone paused to turn on a generator to power floodlights for the darkening plaza and allow the distribution to continue. He said the site was one of five distribution points in the area where Soldiers from his battalion were providing security.

Although a 7 p.m. curfew was set in Hollywood, the site was staying open three hours later to accommodate late arrivals, said Hollywood Police Officer Josh Czerenda. He had been at the site since early morning and was sunburned from the long day of helping manage the site and its traffic.

"We've had two trucks with ice and water here, and a couple of thousand people have gotten aid from those trucks," Czerenda said. "We've given a lot out today."

The Florida Guard members are providing round-the-clock security at the distribution point and were ready to resume support for the hurricane relief efforts when the site reopened at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 26.

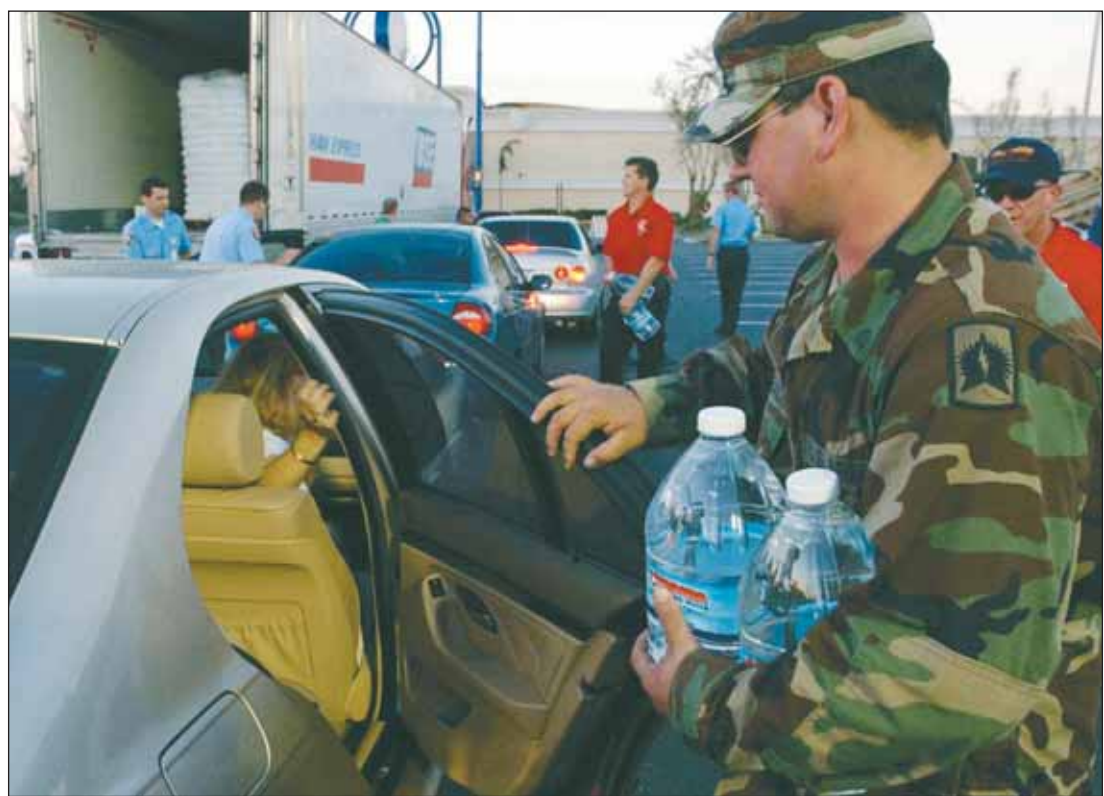


Photo by Spc. Edouard H.R. Gluck

Florida Guard members were quickly placed at the points of distribution in 12 counties and began distributing water, ice and food as soon as it was delivered after Hurricane Wilma cut across the southern part of the state on Oct. 24.

Combat medics aid civilians during crisis

By Spc. Chad Menegay

Ohio National Guard

CAMERON PARISH, La. – Some areas of southwestern Louisiana resemble waste dumps more than residential communities. Some parishes, like Cameron, have lost two-thirds of their livestock. Millions of dollars in sugarcane has been wiped out. Saltwater has replaced freshwater. The estimated cost of recovery is in the billions and the estimated time is years.

However, since Hurricane Rita struck the southwest coast of Louisiana with 120 mph winds on Sept. 24, the main focus has been saving lives and preventing illness. Thousands of National Guard members deployed to do just that.

Enter the combat medic.

The combat medic is specially trained to take care of Soldiers.

However, combat medics from Ohio, Pennsylvania and Arizona responded to a two-vehicle traffic accident in Jennings, La., in early October to treat several severely injured civilians.

"In the midst of getting our area established, one of our ambulance teams responded to a civilian trauma," said 1st Lt. Karin Parrett, a physician's assistant for the 111th Area Support Battalion out of Phoenix, Ariz. "That's part of our mission too."

The unusual scene of medics working hand in hand with civilian emergency personnel appeared to work seamlessly. Medical supplies changed hands, and the injured were secured to spinal boards for transport. One young woman was transported on a local MEDEVAC helicopter.

The way that traffic accident was handled is an example of how the National Guard has been working with other agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Red Cross, and the Incident Management Team, throughout the Gulf Coast, responding together as needed.

"I'm amazed at how the National Guard has come together with all other assets," said Parrett. "And it's interesting to see this many troops in one area."

With so many Soldiers working long hours in a potentially hazardous environment, medics are also prepared to work long hours. Most work sick call.

"My job is to keep those Soldiers who are handing out food and water up and running," said Sgt. Johnathan Miniard, a combat medic for the 2nd Battalion, 107th Cavalry from Kettering, Ohio. "I'm also keeping a running records chart, so if they catch something contagious or anything, we've got it on record."

"Mostly, I'm doing patient evaluations, taking vitals, checking temperatures and blood pressure," said Spc. Sara Gordoa, a combat medic for Arizona MedCom in Phoenix. "I'll get a medical history and find out what the pain's like to make an initial assessment. Then I'll get them fluids, bed

"I'll get a medical history and find out what the pain's like to make an initial assessment. Then I'll get them fluids, bed rest, or whatever else might be required."

– Spc. Sara Gordoa

rest, or whatever else might be required."

The health conditions of southwestern Louisiana are still somewhat unknown as the Environmental Protection Agency and others test the waters, air and soil. The EPA and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality found that withdrawing flood waters deposited residual fuel oil and bacteria in the New Orleans soil, but tests of most other areas of Louisiana have yet to be concluded.

Areas of concern are potentially contaminated soil, air, food or standing water, stray wildlife, mosquitoes and other insects, mold, drinking water and the heat.

The most immediate threats are ants and mosquitoes," said Parrett.

"Louisiana has more cases of West Nile virus than any other state," said Parrett.

"One mission is to get the standing water filled in."

There hasn't been a case of a Soldier in southwestern Louisiana contracting the West Nile virus in Louisiana, but medical personnel are still aware of the danger.

"The mosquitoes are huge and relentless," said Miniard. "The best thing to do is stay clean and use bug spray."

"There's a lot of standing water here, and we've also found water moccasins," said Miniard in Jennings, La. "The flooding is pushing them up. That's why we put a walkway up for our guards."

Medical personnel here also stress showing and sanitizing one's hands on a regular basis.

Of course, in this heat, common sense advice, like drinking plenty of bottled

water, is stressed over and over again.

"Hydrate!" said Parrett.

Yet, sickness is often beyond one's control. So Soldiers can rely on sick call because combat medics say they're prepared to react to many kinds of illness. They've had plenty of practice at adapting and reacting during their deployment so far.

For example, elements of the 111th Area Support Battalion moved three times in five days.

"We can attach to any brigade or battalion within our area of support, and within our company break into treatment teams with a doctor, a physician's assistant, medics and support personnel," said Parrett. "We have the flexibility to move wherever they need us."

"I love it when you're in a situation that's not the friendliest, but you make things work anyway," said Gordoa. "I want to wake up and not know what's going to happen, but know I'm going to make a difference. Even though we have changes every day, morale has been good. We're actually where we're needed - in the field helping Soldiers."



Photo by Spc. Chad Menegay

Army National Guard Spc. Sara Gordoa, a combat medic from Arizona, examines a patient in a mobile emergency room in Jennings, La. The patient complained of stomach pain.

New Mexicans 'DEFY' drug problems

By Staff Sgt. David Strobel

New Mexico National Guard

A dozen feet above the ground, 10-year-old Paul Cordova thought he couldn't move any higher. "I can't!" he called down to the man holding his rope and keeping him safe. "Yes you can. You're already there," said Sgt. Joe Mangram, camp counselor and full-time New Mexico Army National Guard Soldier.

Paul looked up, seeing he had only two more feet until he reached his goal – the top of the climbing tower at Camp DEFY. He closed his eyes for a moment, then gritted his teeth and swung himself up, touching the steel frame at the summit. Grinning, Paul returned to earth and the man who helped him overcome his fears.

Camp DEFY (Drug Education For Youth) is a four-day summer camp run by the New Mexico National Guard, manned with local police officers and organized and funded by the Department of Justice.

"As far as operations go, my Soldiers support the events," said 1st Lt. Michael Meador, Drug Demand Reduction director and camp commander. "We've been doing this program for eight years. This is my first camp."

Meador said his team of seven Soldiers usually operates seven camps each summer.

"The kids are smiling, having fun, and learning something of value at the same time. We're trying to improve their self image, improve their lives," Meador said.

Part of the program involves lessons dis-



David Armasa, 11, reaches for his goal – the top of the climbing wall at Camp DEFY in New Mexico.

guised as games.

While the focus of the camp is to affect the lives of the campers, counselors feel the touch of the kids.

"I know one little boy. He's 10 years old, and he has eight brothers and sisters," said Staff Sgt. Lorraine Tapia, the camp medic and a National Guard middle school mentor. "He's his own caretaker. He's responsible for his own cooking, his own laundry. It's heart-breaking."

Tapia sighed and looked at the campers preparing for lunch. "Some of these kids don't get three square meals a day. They don't have any structure. They don't have any discipline in their lives." A small smile grew on her face. "But By Staff Sgt. David Strobel they do get that here."

Two of the New Mexico National Guard counselors are recent war veterans. They say the contrast between their last and their current assignments are refreshingly striking.

"Compared to combat, working with the kids is a cakewalk," said Spc. Christopher Stanley, a former truck driver in Iraq with the 1115th Transportation Company. He pointed to one camper who made an impression.

"He seems like he doesn't get a lot of help at home. I'm hoping he takes these lessons we're teaching him here at camp and applies them at home. That's what I'm hoping for every kid here, for them all to lead a better life."

"You go from combat, bombs going off, people shooting at you ... to this," said Staff Sgt. Julian Chino, waving his hand at the archery range and the pre-teens getting their first experience with a bow and arrow.

"In Iraq, I saw kids living in dumpsters, out on the street, really gruesome stuff," Chino said. "Here, we're role models. The kids look up to us."

Camp DEFY's noncommissioned officer in charge has watched the camp and the youngsters almost from the start.

"I've been working this camp for seven years," said Staff Sgt. Will Romero. "When I first started, I was a Pfc. and a camp assistant. Seven years later I'm running it."

Romero looked back on his experiences with the kids and the camp. "Mentoring kids, making a difference in their lives ... I think I've got the greatest job in the world."



A camp counselor stands on belay during the climbing event.



Three young climbers battle the wall during Camp DEFY.

ems through program with children



(Above)
Staff Sgt.
Elizabeth
Castillo con-
duct a team-
building
exercise with
9-year-old
Ruby



Tafoya, 9, passes through the 'web' during a team-building exercise.



Twelve-year-old archer Izaak Long shows his championship form on the Camp DEFY archery range in New Mexico. Long was only the champion on his team, and he earned the highest score in the camp.



(Right)
Brothers
Yuriah and
Yael Valle
paddle their
kayak during
their visit to
Camp DEFY.

Chaplains comfort troops during hurricane relief

By **Spc. Eric Moore**

Wyoming National Guard

NEW ORLEANS – Thousands of National Guard members have flocked to Louisiana and other Gulf Coast locations to help with relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina. One group provides a service that is different from most. They are the chaplains.

Soldiers deployed to places around the world sometimes require spiritual and religious guidance. Many feel that in the midst of relief missions for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the need for chaplains and religious support is very important. To answer the call, chaplains from both the Army and Air National Guard have traveled to the Southeast to help those who need it most.

"It feels really good to know that you're making a difference," said Chaplain (Maj.) Debra C. Berry, chaplain with the 117th Air Refueling Wing in Birmingham, Ala. "It's natural for those in the helping professions to want to do something," added Berry, one of several chaplains who minister to people in New Orleans.

One of the chaplains' duties is to brief Soldiers and Airman coming to their base camps. That includes an in-processing brief and an out-processing brief.

The in-processing brief consists of thanking the Soldiers and airman for their efforts and telling them what to expect while in Louisiana.

The out-processing brief, when the Soldiers and Airman are leaving, informs them about what to expect when they return to their homes.

Chaplains also visit troops working in sections of New Orleans to determine morale. They also hold worship services and provide pastoral counseling for those who need it. One important place the chaplains visit is the Disaster Recovery Center. The DRC is the main center for Federal Emergency Management Agency and Red Cross relief efforts. The DRC provides food, water, food stamps, and medical treatment to those in need.

The DRC helps about 200 displaced residents every day. Many of these people are



National Guard photo

National Guard chaplains were ministering to Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen participating in hurricane relief in Louisiana in early October.

happy to receive the assistance.

"Everywhere we go, people have hope and expectations that things will get better," Berry said about residents of New Orleans. "They are very appreciative to have the National Guard around."

This joint operation between the Army and Air Guard chaplains has been very effective,

officials claim. Soldiers from every religious denomination can find guidance while on deployment because there are always chaplains to help.

"There has been great cooperation between both branches of service," said Air Guard Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Donald Morris about the joint effort. "We are all just here to help."

First Air Guard member completes Special Operations school

By **Senior Airman Alec Lloyd**

127th Wing Public Affairs

MT. CLEMENS, Mich. – Learning new tricks is not just for the young dogs. Master Sgt. Peter Barberi, a 46-year-old member of the 107th Weather Flight at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., recently graduated from Air Force Advanced Skills Training at Hurlburt Field in Florida. He was the first Air National Guard member to complete the course.

The five-month course emphasizes combat and survival techniques necessary for special operations. For Barberi, a member of the

107th Weather Flight since 2001, the training represented a new and satisfying level of personal and professional challenges.

The first two and a half months of the training focused on tactical infiltration and ex-filtration techniques, or simply getting in and out of danger zones without the enemy's knowledge or hindrance. That represents a small but critical element of combat weather operations.

The second half centered on small unit tactics and small-arms proficiency, a vital skill for combat weather members who often must venture deep behind enemy lines to get

real-time data on local weather conditions.

The physical demands of the course during the height of the Florida summer were daunting enough, but Barberi had an additional obstacle to overcome - winning the trust and confidence of his teammates.

The full Advanced Skills Training course has conducted in four phases. The first two focus on water and ground operations - useful training for combat controllers and other special operations, but beyond the scope of combat weather operators.

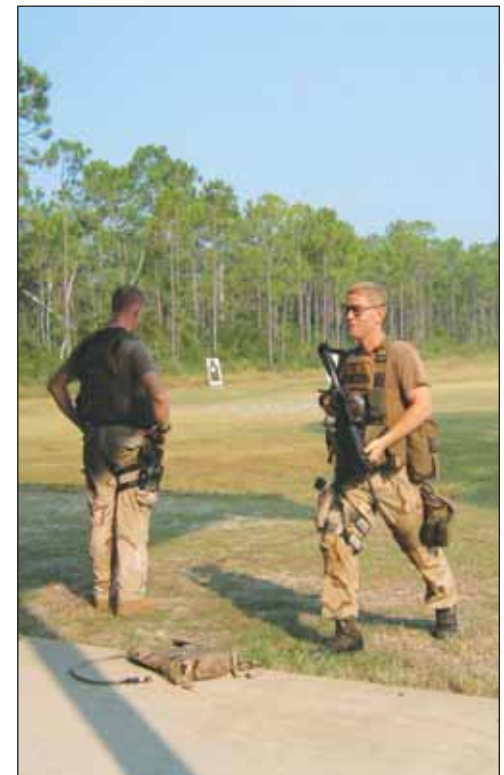
Barberi did not attend these two phases, but his teammates did. When he and other late-comers arrived for the final two phases they had to prove themselves to men who had already established strong bonds based on shared hardships. The best way to do that, said Barberi, was to maximize one's individual score at the initial physical training evaluation.

"It is kind of like a pack of dogs when a new dog shows up," Barberi said. "If you don't score really, really well, it's going to take a lot to redeem yourself."

Barberi posted the second highest score - no mean feat in a group where being in your 30s counts as being "old" and the vast majority of participants are under 21 years old. At age 46, he is also believed to be the oldest graduate of the course.

Though twice as old as most of his teammates, Sergeant Barberi felt his age gave him an edge. "I had training, motivation and experience," he said. He noted that decades of physical exercise had given him a detailed knowledge of his body's potential as well as its limits.

Barberi said his status as a traditional Air National Guard member was not a factor with his teammates. His drive and competence were all that mattered. It isn't surprising that they were impressed. Barberi, like



Barberi walks off the firing range after testing his marksmanship skills.

many 107th Weather Flight members, is willing to go to great lengths just to be in the unit.

The Californian flies to Michigan for every drill weekend at his own expense, although the cost is mitigated by space available transportation.

Other members of his unit fly in from Massachusetts, Idaho and Virginia, he said. For them, service is not about money but about doing the mission and being among the best in their career field.

That was what Barberi found in Florida. His class included many prior service members from other branches who came to the Air Force because of the training opportunities.



Photos by Senior Airman Alec Lloyd

Forty-six-year-old Master Sgt. Peter Barberi hustles through the monkey bars on his way to becoming the first Air National Guardsman to complete the Air Force Advanced Skills training at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Guard leaders hail New Hampshire program for returning troops

By Maj. Greg Heilshorn

New Hampshire National Guard

CONCORD, N.H.— When Capt. Erik Fessenden first heard that his Soldiers would have to endure an extra week of out-processing after they returned home from Iraq, he questioned the logic of his senior leaders.

His Soldiers would have to spend another week away from families, another week of standing in lines filling out the same paperwork they had already completed in Kuwait and at their demobilization station at Fort Dix, N.J.

"I didn't think it was necessary," said Fessenden, whose unit, the 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, was one of six in the New Hampshire Army National Guard that served in Operation Iraqi Freedom II. "I thought the state didn't have a very good idea. You had people putting together a program who didn't deploy to Iraq."

So Fessenden and the other New Hampshire Army Guard commanders pushed back. Six months later, they are glad their leadership didn't budge.

Since February, when more than 800 New Hampshire Army guardsmen returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, the state's Reunion and Reentry Program has gained national attention for its partnership with state agencies and cooperation with veterans centers as a first line of defense to help Soldiers return to their civilian lives.

Nearly 50 percent of the Guard members requested follow-up support after their initial counseling, and at least three potential suicides were prevented due in large part to the early intervention offered by the program, officials explained. Two of the soldiers at risk asked for help after recognizing some of the warning signs in themselves.

The initiative, which borrows from the lessons learned by the 82nd Airborne Division and by the Marines and Navy, is being hailed as a best-practices model, and it could serve as a road map for other states to address the challenges faced by thousands of Guard members returning from extended combat tours. How these men and women — and their families — are treated will have a direct impact on retention and future readiness, Guard leaders say.

On Sept. 19 a group of New Hampshire Army Guard combat veterans and senior leaders testified before the Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The committee hosted a public hearing at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington, N.H., to gather testimony on the program's value.

A month earlier, 70 National Guard and congressional representatives from across New England joined managers and councilors from the Northeast Region Veterans Center at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts for the same purpose.

"We are not suggesting we have found the magic pill to eliminate post-traumatic stress syndrome and other issues of war, but we are aggressively educating and encouraging Soldiers who struggle to reach out early for support," said Col. Deborah Carter, human resources officer for the New Hampshire Guard.

A year ago, when New Hampshire Guard leaders were discussing the return of more than 800 Guard members, the prevailing question was about the length of the welcome home ceremonies, Carter said.

But when Soldiers who were home on leave began exhibiting erratic behavior such as binge drinking and isolation, Carter said the conversation shifted to other concerns.

"We knew we had to get smarter," she said. "We needed to do more, but we didn't know what that was."

Leadership decided to tap into those organizations that had dealt with the issue numerous times. The lessons



New Hampshire Army National Guard Sgt. Nathan Smith, who was wounded during a firefight in Iraq, receives a Bronze Star with Valor Device from Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the adjutant general for New Hampshire, and Gov. John Lynch during a Support Our Troops rally in Concord, N.H. Lynch and Clark joined forces to establish a Reentry and Reunion Program for returning Guard members that has gained national attention for its successful early intervention.

Photo by Master Sgt. Mike Daigle

learned by the 82nd Airborne and the Marines and Navy became a starting point. The next step was to reach out to the community, Carter said.

The Department of Health and Human Services, which had been working with the New Hampshire National Guard's family and youth programs, volunteered to contact its list of helpers, including physicians, law enforcement personnel, school counselors and employers, throughout the state.

"The state estimated it reached 10,000 helpers," Carter said. Three hundred attended the first meeting.

A three-day model evolved. It covered benefits, transitional counseling, and Veterans Administration enrollment with medical and dental assessments. Guard members would also attend classes on stress-related combat issues, myths and expectations about reunions, and interactive sessions about returning to family life and the workplace.

A short time later, on Jan. 25, New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch held a press conference with Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the state adjutant general, to unveil the Reunion and Reentry Program. They called it "Operation Welcome Home."

"We know that they will face challenges in re-adjusting," Lynch said. "As a state government, and as citizens, we should be there to help make the transition as smooth as possible for our National Guard members and their families."

The Departments of Education, Safety, Corrections, Labor, and Employment Security, as well as the State Employee Assistance Program and the Red Cross committed resources to the program.

The Veterans Administration provided hundreds of hours of medical and dental support, and the Northeast Regional Veterans Center provided up to 900 hours of counseling.

All of it was on a volunteer basis.

"We were enormously pleased to help with New Hampshire's project," said Timothy Beebe, regional manager of the regional veterans center which serves New England and the state of New York. "There has not been an opportunity to be proactive with returning soldiers until now. This is the first time we are doing a proactive assessment of Soldiers. Prior to this it has been reactionary."

The results of New Hampshire's Reunion and Reentry Program far exceeded everyone's original expectations:

- All Soldiers received mandatory introductory counseling through a local veterans center.
- All Soldiers met with local VA providers to learn about benefits.
- 48 percent of the Soldiers requested follow-up support after their initial counseling.
- All Soldiers enrolled in the VA during the New Hampshire Guard's three-day process.
- New Hampshire Guard Soldiers enrolled in the Hospital Primary Care at the VA at a rate of twice the national average.
- Almost half the Soldiers filed VA claims.
- One of every 10 Soldiers received acute care through the VA emergency room while processing.
- All Soldiers were provided a confidential opportunity to disclose medical issues, and 2 percent actually needed to return to active duty for appropriate treatment.

Beebe said that three conditions were crucial to the program's success: confidentiality; making the counseling mandatory for all Soldiers; and developing a questionnaire to help modify and adjust the process.

Equally important was the fact that Soldiers were being counseled by fellow veterans, Beebe said. "The Soldier sat down with somebody who spoke veteran."

The program doesn't end after three days, Carter emphasized. There are follow-up programs available for marriage enrichment and long-term health care during the next 90 to 180 days.

After seeing the enormous payoff for Soldiers, the program's harshest critics have become some of its most vocal supporters.

"There were many issues not addressed at Fort Dix," Fessenden said. "Fort Dix is in the business of pushing units back to the states as fast it can. If we didn't have this program, we wouldn't have caught those issues."

"I would tell any commander that you owe it to your Soldiers to make them go through a program like this," Fessenden added. "Because in the end they'll thank you."

ESGR:

South Dakota university wins Defense Freedom Award

WASHINGTON – The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), in conjunction with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, presented South Dakota State University and 14 other employers with the prestigious Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for 2005 on Oct. 15 in Washington.

“The 15 Freedom Award recipients exemplify the patriotism prevalent amongst American employers who support their Reserve and National Guard employees,” said David Janes, national chairman of ESGR.

The honor is bestowed to only 15 employers throughout the nation each year, making it the highest award given by the ESGR program. SDSU, located in Brookings, has a record of outstanding employer support which distinguished it among the 1,492 other employers nominated for the award. The university is the first Freedom Award recipient in South Dakota history.

“Through their supportive actions, these employers have recognized that the outstanding young Americans who make huge personal sacrifices to serve their country are valuable and contributing employees,” said

Janes. “When their employees are mobilized they want them back, safe at home, and back at work.”

“Deployments are always difficult, and employers all around the state have shared that burden,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Gorman, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. “We are pleased to see that all of their sustained efforts are being recognized at the highest level.”

The SDSU administration and leadership have made efforts to continually offer encouragement and gratitude to the university’s 15 employees and 230 students who have already been called to active duty. This backing has taken many forms, ranging from SDSU President Peggy Miller’s regular attendance at family support meetings to letters sent to every deployed service member and benefits that exceed those required by law, officials said.

Initially, one might look to the school’s heritage when explaining this high level of commitment to supporting Soldiers in the Guard and Reserve. As the state’s only land grant university, SDSU was originally required to teach military leadership training to all the school’s male students corresponding with the congressional goal of maintaining a

“Never in our history has our country relied more on the Citizen-Soldier as a defender of freedom and warrior in the Global War on Terrorism. SDSU, under the leadership of President Miller, has ensured that the transition from Soldier to student is seamless. I am proud to work for a leader who recognizes the sacrifices these men and women have made.”

– Col. Keith Corbett

smaller full-time military.

“As a result of that history, we have a long commitment of service to the nation,” said Miller. “It is a part of who we are, and it’s always a part of what we do.”

At first, each effort may have seemed small to SDSU’s staff and students. However, the attitude embodied by each action and the overall effect they had distinguished the university as a leading contender in the rigorous nomination procedure, which is used to choose the Freedom Award recipients.

“Never in our history has our country relied more on the Citizen-Soldier as a defender of freedom and warrior in the Global War on Terrorism,” said Col. Keith Corbett, deputy commander of the SDNG Joint Force

Headquarters in Rapid City.

Corbett, who is also the assistant to the dean of the College of General Studies and Outreach Programs at SDSU, nominated Miller and SDSU for the national award.

“SDSU, under the leadership of President Miller, has ensured that the transition from Soldier to student is seamless,” Corbett said. “I am proud to work for a leader who recognizes the sacrifices these men and women have made.”

In the selection process, a Soldier or family member must first submit a written form nominating their place of work for the honor. Next, the applications are examined by 55 local ESGR committees and narrowed down to 165 nominations. The nominations are then reviewed by the ESGR National Review Board and further narrowed to 30 finalists. In the last step of the elimination process, the 30 nominees are examined by the Freedom Award National Selection Board and from that pool 15 winners are selected.

“The Global War on Terrorism has required our Guardsmen and Reservists to make great sacrifices, but it has also required the patience and commitment of those who support them – families, employers and friends,” Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey told the recipients. “Thanks to all of you for your patriotism and for giving our Soldiers the support they need and deserve. I cannot think of a better measure of the leadership and patriotism of a business organization than to be recognized for outstanding employer support of the Guard and Reserve.”

Other recipients were executives from Alticor, Inc., Ada, Mich.; Citizens Financial Group, Providence, R.I.; the Eaton Corporation, Cleveland; Enterprise Rent-a-Car, St. Louis; IDACORP, Boise, Idaho; the Los Angeles Police Department; Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections; Pioneer Financial Services, Kansas City, Mo.; Ryland Homes, Calabasas, Calif.; Sears Roebuck and Co., Hoffman Estates, Ill.; State of Delaware; Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Torrance, Calif.; USAA, San Antonio; Wachovia Corporation, Charlotte, N.C.

More information about ESGR Employer Outreach Programs and volunteer opportunities is available at www.esgr.mil <<http://www.esgr.mil>.



Photo by Spc. Christian Fernandez

South Dakota State University President Peggy G. Miller receives the 2005 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award presented by Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey (left) and ESGR National Chairman David Janes on Oct. 15 in Washington.

Beware of knockoffs until new uniforms arrive in early '06

By Annette M. Fournier

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Army officials are warning Soldiers against buying imitation Army Combat Uniforms in lieu of waiting for Army-approved ACUs to arrive in stores.

AAFES military clothing sales stores are scheduled to get ACUs in April, but a spokesman said they may appear sooner.

"The Army has advised AAFES to expect to start seeing ACUs in January," said Judd Anstey, media branch manager with AAFES. "Details are still being worked out at this time."

Some Soldiers, anxious to get the new uniforms, have bought imitation ACUs from unauthorized vendors. Authorized uniforms made to Army specifications are produced only by government-contracted companies and will be sold through Army and Air Force Exchange Service stores, officials said.

Unauthorized uniforms typically do not meet the Army's specifications in various ways, such as appearance, usability and durability, said Bob Panichelle, product executive in the Field Clothing Branch of Defense Supply Center Philadelphia's Clothing and Textiles Supply Chain, the organization contracting for ACU production.

"It's extremely important for Soldiers to wait until the ACU is available in the Army military clothing sales stores before purchasing a uniform," said Sgt. Maj. Katrina L. Easley, the Army's uniform policy sergeant major in the G1. "This prevents the Soldier from purchasing a uniform that has not been manufactured in accordance with the uniform quality control program."

Soldiers purchasing uniforms, uniform items, or heraldic items from establishments other than the Army military clothing sales stores must ensure that the items are authorized for wear and conform to appropriate military specifications or are manufactured in accordance with the Uniform Quality Control Program or the heraldic quality control system, Easley said. Soldiers should consult Army Regulation 670-1 for guidance.

Soldiers to have two ACUs by 2007

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia contracted 16 commercial sources, as well as Unicorn Federal Prison Industries, the

National Institute for the Blind and the National Institute for the Severely Handicapped to produce the ACUs, Panichelle said.

A similar model for awarding contracts, monitoring production and overseeing the disbursement of uniforms will be used in fielding the Air Force's new battle dress uniform, expected to begin fielding in the next two years, Panichelle said.

The final wear-out date for the battle dress uniforms and the desert combat uniforms is yet to be determined, said Easley. Active-duty, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers should have two sets of ACUs by May 1, 2007, according to AR 670-1. By May 1, 2008, all Soldiers should have four pairs each, and by April 2010, ROTC students should have four sets.

Knockoffs could threaten safety

To tell if an ACU is authorized, Soldiers should look for two tags sewn into the uniform. One tag near the collar is printed with the size and the second tag, located elsewhere, on the uniform gives the government contract number identifying what company made the uniform, and care instructions, according to Program Executive Office Soldier's Web site.

Some uniforms being made offshore at present do not contain the Identification of Friend or Foe tag, a tag which allows Soldiers to identify friendly forces at night. Buying a uniform without the tag could put a Soldier in danger, Panichelle said.

Other uniforms may contain fabric that is not in compliance with Army specs for the ACU camouflage pattern, Panichelle said, and could jeopardize the safety or security of an individual Soldier or an entire unit.

Like BDUs, ACUs have an expected wear-life of 6 to 12 months, and are made of the same rip-stop fabric as the summer BDUs. For quality control, DSCP closely monitors production at its manufacturing facilities through periodic site visits and quality inspections by specialists assigned to these facilities, Panichelle said.

If Soldiers have problems with issued ACUs, they can return the uniforms for a monetary refund or a store credit. With imitation ACUs, there is no guarantee of the quality of materials used, location where uni-



Photo by Spc. Mike Pryor

Deploying Soldiers are the first to be issued the Army Combat Uniform. Spc. Ronald Turner wears the new uniform while providing overwatch protection from atop a hill in Mianashin, Afghanistan.

forms were manufactured, or refunds for defective uniforms.

ACUs issued by priority

The official ACUs are not currently available for purchase, and at this point are still being issued on a prioritized basis, with deploying units top on the list.

At basic training sites, ACUs were issued to trainees beginning Oct. 1. At the Basic Combat Training Brigade, Fort Benning, Ga., the supply is limited but trainees receive ACUs before they go to their advanced training, said Dave Thompson, brigade supply officer in charge.

Commanders in basic training units and graduates of drill sergeant school are being given the opportunity to buy ACUs early so they can set the example for trainees and to maintain uniformity in a unit, Thompson said.

Soldiers and commanders are responsible for ensuring they purchase and wear authorized uniforms and heraldic items, according to Army regulation 670-1.

Commanders will also conduct periodic inspections to ensure that all personnel under

their command wear only uniforms and heraldic items produced by certified manufacturers and that they meet specifications for design and quality, in accordance with AR 670-01.

The 16 companies awarded the contracts to produce ACUs are:

- American Apparel
- DJ Manufacturing Corp.
- Propper
- Golden
- Woolrich
- Bethel Industries, Inc.
- Bremen Bowden
- Rutter Rex
- Fox Apparel
- Sidran, Inc.
- American Power Source, Inc.
- Ashland Sales and Service
- Caribbean Needle Point, Inc.
- Wear-tech, Inc.
- Tullahoma
- AC Fabricated Products

For more information, see the Program Executive Office Web site: www.peosoldier.army.mil/pmequipment.

Alabama Guard Soldier in Germany wins Military Idol

By Kristy Davis and Charman Z. Brackett

Army News Service

FORT GORDON, Ga. – Choked with emotion, Army National Guard Staff Sgt. William Glenn paused while singing his final number "Courage" after learning he had been named the first-ever Military Idol.

Hundreds of Soldiers worldwide competed to make it into the first ever Military Idol competition. Each of the 36 participating Army installations sent forth one competitor to the final Military Idol competition held here.

After a week of head-to-head showdowns, being judged by country recording artist Michael Peterson, retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley and Debra Byrd, vocal coach and arranger for American Idol, the competition was narrowed down to five finalists for a live Web cast.

Voting for the final competition was held through Army Knowledge Online for two hours and was open to all AKO account holders.

Alabama Guardsman surprised to win

"You can't explain it," said Glenn, a 42-year-old Alabama National Guard Soldier, of his feelings on winning the title. Glenn represented Darmstadt, Germany, in the competition because his unit, the 258th Military Police Company, was mobilized and is now serving there.

Glenn, a native of Chattanooga, Tenn., spent most of his life in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

He was on active duty from 1983 to 1989, serving as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. He joined the Alabama National Guard and was called to active duty in January.



Military Idol winner, Staff Sgt. William Glenn, performs Oct. 22 during the finals at Fort Gordon, Ga.

Photo by Kristy Davies

Contacting a Family Program Coordinator near you

The National Guard Family Program office in each state joint force headquarters (JFHQ) is designed to assist family members of all service members, regardless of the military organization or status, with information and/or referrals. Following is a list of Family Program offices in the 54 states and territories followed by Wing Family Program Coordinators.

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188FW AIR NATIONAL GUARD
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189AW
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853-9094
162 FW
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See LIST on Page 15

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107 ARW
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Mississippi Guard answers hurricane's challenges

By 2nd Lt. Andy Thaggard

Mississippi Army National Guard

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. — Many a Guard member wears the Mississippi Emergency Service Medal for duty following a natural disaster. From Hurricane Camille in 1969, the previous standard of catastrophic, to Hurricane Dennis in July 2005, the Mississippi National Guard has been there.

With Katrina following an ominous track over Florida, the Mississippi National Guard's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) began the usual preparations. Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, and the Joint Force Headquarters staff received hourly reports. Coordination with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), an established year-round process, intensified.

By Saturday, Aug. 27, Katrina's collision with the Mississippi Gulf Coast was imminent. Gov. Haley Barbour declared a state of emergency, authorizing the use of the National Guard. With more than 4,200 Soldiers and Airmen deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, all Mississippi National Guard units that remained would be activated.

Operation Secure Magnolia began. Major subordinate commands for Army and Air Guard forces were ordered to mobilize 10 percent of their troops for state active duty and prepare for movement to Camp Shelby.

As Katrina grew in strength, so did the Guard. On Sunday, she stood as the fourth strongest hurricane on record. The Mississippi National Guard stood up as Joint Task Force Magnolia. It was comprised of 1,820 Soldiers and Airmen, with teams of 175 engineers and military police pre-positioned and assigned to the emergency operations center in each of the three coastal counties. Additional troops were reporting in to their home armories.

The eye of Katrina made landfall just west of the Mississippi-Louisiana border on Monday, Aug. 29, as a Category 4 hurricane with 155 mph winds. She crawled through the state for two days, carving a 900,000 square-mile path from the Gulf of Mexico to Tennessee.

In her wake, entire coastal communities were destroyed, communications south of Jackson were wiped out, and more than 900,000 residences statewide were powerless.

Lives were lost, including that of Sgt. Josh E. Russell, Detachment 1, Company A, 890th Engineer Battalion, following a rescue mission. Another 224 Mississippians died because of the storm.

Even before Katrina's rage passed, the now 2,444-strong Guard force began relief operations. Their ground and air missions included clearing debris, distributing food and water, search and rescue, and security.

While Mississippi Guard forces marshaled and moved south, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) system was in full swing. MEMA made hundreds of EMAC requests for military and



Photo by 2nd Lt. Murray Shugars

A scoop loader and civilian bulldozer, operated by members of the Mississippi National Guard's 890th Engineer Battalion headquartered in Gulfport, Miss., clear rubble from a Pass Christian neighborhood devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The engineers were on state active duty. They hunkered down in armories and shelters along the Gulf Coast until the storm's eye passed over on Aug. 29. They continue cleanup efforts along the entire Gulf Coast.

special civilian assistance during the relief effort.

Tuesday, Sept. 30, saw a rapid buildup at the Camp Shelby Training Site which was transformed into a staging area for relief operations. Even though power and telephone lines were entangled amidst a mass of downed trees, Camp Shelby personnel quickly adapted to the additional mission while continuing to support the deployment of a brigade combat team to Iraq.

By the end of the week, all Mississippi Guard units were in place along the coast.

The 38th Infantry Division from the Indiana Army Guard became active in Mississippi on Sept. 2. The infantry division augmented the joint task force and provided command and control to 10,000 Task Force Cyclone Soldiers.

Operations were managed at Camp Shelby and at the 890th Engineer Battalion's readiness center and the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport.

During 20 days, Mississippi was part of the largest response to the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. Through the EMAC, 40 states placed 16,596 Army and Air National Guard troops under the control of Joint Force Headquarters-Mississippi within 96 hours, creating a division-sized force and eliminating the need for active Army troops in Mississippi.

Thousands of volunteers from the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and many other organizations teamed with local civic and church organizations to provide relief and aid.

Tremendous strides were made within

weeks. Debris clearance and search and rescue missions were concluding. Food and water distribution sites across the state were closed as the water and power came back to homes. Security missions were decreasing.

On Sept. 22, the 38th Division stood down. With 3,265 Mississippi Guard members on active duty, out-of-state forces began returning to their homes.

With predictions that this would be one of most active hurricane seasons on record, Hurricane Rita was no surprise.

The Mississippi coast was spared additional damage when Rita struck the Texas-Louisiana border as a Category 3 storm on Sept. 24. The Mississippi Guard stayed the course and hunkered down during Rita's high winds and driving rain.

As out-of-state forces withdrew, the Mississippi Guard also put into place a plan for long-term support of the coastal relief effort. Joint Task Force Magnolia continues to operate, supporting 20 counties with a volunteer force of more than 500 Mississippi Army and Air Guard volunteers.

"Our mission is to continue supporting relief operations," said Lt. Col Mark Prine, the task force commander. "We are a lean, mission-tailored work force."

Although volunteers could remain on duty for an additional six months, Prine expects a significant decrease in troop strength by the end of the year.

"We have accomplished so much in such a short time," said Prine. "The excellent work done thus far brings us to this position. It is a tribute to all the volunteers and the National Guard."

No one could have anticipated the impact of Katrina. The crushing, far-reaching devastation and total mobilization of forces that occurred in Mississippi will never be surpassed, officials hope. Yet, the Mississippi National Guard's response to Katrina will become part of a new model for reacting to catastrophic, domestic events.

Mississippi Army Guard aviation, according to a Pentagon staff member, re-wrote the book on post-event support by providing excellent, sometimes unorthodox, first-responder service to citizens with a multi-state aviation task force of 72 aircraft while working from a damaged flight facility.

The Mississippi Air Guard took on new and vital roles, such as managing points of distribution, supplying communications to sister services throughout the state, and commanding task forces of predominantly Army personnel.

Soldiers and Airmen answered the call to duty despite enormous personal losses. Some coastal units had 30 percent of their members' homes totally destroyed or left uninhabitable — with 90 percent of those homes significantly damaged. More than 600 Soldiers' families and homes were directly affected by the storm.

Even so, the Guard was faithful.

"They have faced the most destructive hurricane in Mississippi's history," said the adjutant general. "They have responded in a fashion true to their National Guard heritage by putting their personal lives on hold while providing comfort and assistance to their fellow Mississippians during their time of need."